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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/755,573	01/08/2001	James Claude Carnahan	RD-28,047	3796
6147	7590	06/29/2004	EXAMINER	
GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY GLOBAL RESEARCH PATENT DOCKET RM. BLDG. K1-4A59 SCHENECTADY, NY 12309			HANDY, DWAYNE K	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1743	

DATE MAILED: 06/29/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/755,573	Applicant(s) CARNAHAN ET AL.	
	Examiner Dwayne K Handy	Art Unit 1743	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 January 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-36 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 15-20 and 33-36 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 and 21-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) 1-36 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 08 January 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-14 and 21-32, drawn to a device for normalizing gas flow, classified in class 422, subclass 129.
 - II. Claims 15-20 and 33-36, drawn to a method of normalizing gas flow, classified in class 436, subclass 174.
2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions II and I are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the apparatus may be used in a chemical reaction.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
3. During a telephone conversation with Mr. Andy Caruso on 6/18/04 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 1-14 and 21-32. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this

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Office action. Claims 15-20 and 33-36 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

4. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Drawings

5. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the plurality of reaction vessels must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement

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sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

7. Claims 1-6, 12-14, 21-24 and 30-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sugarman et al. (5,503,805). Sugarman et al. teach an apparatus and method for parallel coupling reactions. The device is best shown in Figures 1 and 6 and described in columns 4 and 5. The device contains a plurality of reaction vessels (201-209) with inlet and exit ends connected to a pressurized delivery system (256) through individually controllable valves (100-109). An upper manifold (212) provides

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feed lines (221-229) for the feeding of a bead suspension to the reactors (column 4, line 48 – col. 5, line 67). The bead suspension is made from glass, resins or plastic and is used to join small molecules through reactions in the vessel. Sugarman et al. disclose an agitation mechanism in column 5, line 56 and recites the use of a frit element in column 15, lines 34-60.

8. Claims 1-6, 9-14, 21-24 and 27-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Zuellig et al. (6,126,904). Zuellig et al. teach an apparatus for the synthesis of chemical libraries. The embodiments of the device most relevant to the instant claims are best shown in Figures 2, 3, and 17. In general, the device includes a plurality of vessels (40) connected to common liquid (50) and gas lines (60) through a plurality of valves (112) on a valve manifold (114) (columns 6 and 8). The vessels are made of an inert material and contain a frit (32) in the lower portion of the vessel to support a solid phase resin (column 7). Agitation is provided by an agitator (35) under the force of a magnet (500) (column 8, line 1-7). A controller (70) is provided to automate the various operations of the reactors including fluid transfer (col. 6, lines 58-64). In Figure 17, Zuellig discloses an embodiment which features the use of a vacuum system (724) connected to the bottom of the reaction vessels (30) through a valve (721) and nipple structure (722). The Examiner considers a nipple structure to be a gas tight seal.

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Inventorship

9. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148

USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

11. Claims 7, 8, 25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugarman (5,503,805) in view of Turner et al. (6,306,658).

Sugarman teaches every element of claim 7 except for a pressure sensor. Turner et al. teach a parallel reactor system. In the embodiment shown in Figure 31 and described in columns 25-26 Turner et al. teach a pressure control system for a group of reactors (912) that includes pressure sensors (924) coupled to a processor (928). The pressure sensors are used in conjunction with the feed/exit valves (920) to control the pressure in the vessels by controlling the valves in response to measured pressure (col. 26, lines 13-34). It would have been obvious to combine the pressure control elements (sensor, controller) from Turner with the system of Sugarman. One would add the elements from Turner to provide pressure control in the reactors.

Conclusion

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Kedar (6,165,778), Kilcoin et al. (6,190,619), Brennan (6,001,311), Dales et al. (6,548,026), Hajduk et al. (6,528,026), Freitag et al. (6,485,692), Ruediger et al. (6,432,366) and Cargill et al. (5,609,826) all teach parallel reaction systems. Cook et al. (6,696,298) teach a reagent dispensing system.


13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dwayne K Handy whose telephone number is (571)-272-1259. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on (571)-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

DKH
June 26, 2004


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
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